



# GOAL – as busy as ever in 2010



GOAL nurse Elaine Brennan at work in famine stricken Ethiopia.

Unfortunately it has been an extremely busy year yet again for GOAL but fortunately the incredibly generous people of Longford have continued to dig deep to support GOAL and its vital work worldwide. From January to November 11th, Longford donations had reached a truly staggering € 55,333.04.

The New Year had hardly arrived when the first major disaster struck in Haiti leaving total destruction in its wake. GOAL responded straight away and are still working away as you read this.

Thousands of shelters and hundreds of latrines as well as shower and hand-wash blocks have been built. In order to generate badly needed income, thousands of locals are employed on cash-for-work projects clearing rubble and collecting rubbish.

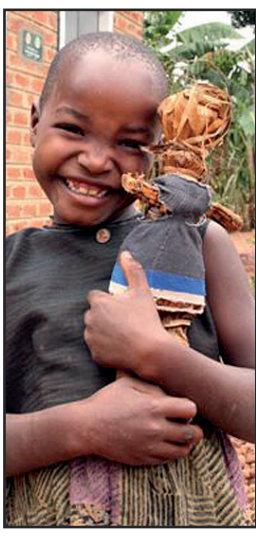
More recently, Pakistan was the scene of floods that had to be seen to be believed. Today GOAL is working across Sindh Province providing shelter, hygiene kits, plastic sheeting, sleeping mats, cooking utensils etc to thousands of families. 10.5 million water purification tablets have also been distributed by GOAL aid workers which will provide safe drinking water for 55,000 families for three months.

Meanwhile the work continues in Uganda at building 1,500 houses. Donations from Longford helped kick start this project with about 15 houses built directly from local money. Though not much in the news, Niger, Ethiopia and Sudan continue to have food and health problems on a massive scale and where GOALies are active in trying to lessen the suffering of the most vulnerable. And of course GOAL is still very involved in helping street children in places like Nairobi and Addis Ababa.

The main fundraiser for GOAL in Longford is the Christmas Day GOAL Mile which starts every year at 12 noon from Connolly Barracks. Each year, it has been run through the streets of the town until 2009 when we had to divert up the Battery Road because of the Cathedral fire. This year, as ever, we'll be back at Connolly Barracks and this time we'll be on our usual route, no matter what the weather, rain, hail or shine.

Finally, a sincere and heart felt THANK YOU for the exceptional support GOAL enjoys in Longford. It's deeply appreciated from Haiti to Pakistan, from the street children of Nairobi to the most vulnerable and hungry in Niger.

*Thank you from GOAL – Tiernan Dolan.*



A young Ugandan orphan clutches her home made doll outside her house built by GOAL using funds raised in Longford

## Aisling Children's Arts Festival 2010

The Aisling Children's Arts Festival celebrated its 13th year recently... teenagers now but still children at heart! The recession was put to one side as children and grownups from all over the county enjoyed the family day, theatre shows and workshops.

The week started off with a Family Fun Day in St Michael's Boys School. This new venue for the day proved to be a great hit and we are very grateful to Peter Walshe, his staff and the Board of Management for facilitating us. Four different workshops took place during the day and 156 children went home with colourful wind chimes from one of them. We also had fun

with cards, circus tricks and the ever popular enchanted fairies workshop. There were never ending queues for the climbing wall, while there were shows in the main hall from Wolfgang Glochenspiel and Johnny Phelan "Juggler Extraordinaire" The Animal Roadshow was a first for the festival but we hope they will come back. Children were able to see and hold lizards, snakes, owls, hedgehogs and much more. The girls from Transition Year ensured that all the children had their faces painted while the boys from St Mel's helped with the circus skills workshop. The best thing about the day for parents was that they could leave their wallets at home as all the activities provided on the day were free.



Pictured celebrating Aisling Children's Arts Festival 2010.

The Backstage Theatre was busy for the week hosting a variety of shows and exhibitions for the festival. There was a packed house on Friday for the return of Mr. Toons and his balloon all the way from Denmark. The young children were wide eyed with amazement as Mr Toons disappeared into his balloon, while the "veterans" who had seen him last year were impressed with his cycling up the steps of the theatre. 'The Man who Planted Trees' an acclaimed children's production came to us from Scotland and children were still talking about it the following week. There were rave reviews for the Aisling Theatre project by the students from St Joseph's National School and Stonepark N.S. These children wrote and then performed a wonderful production on Wednesday evening at the Backstage. Another highlight of the week was the photography exhibition in the Atrium Gallery in Longford. A professional photographer work shopped with two local National Schools Tashinny N.S and Aughnacliffe NS over six weeks. The children learned the craft of photography using an experiential and fun approach. We were certainly wowed by their very own exhibition which was launched in the Atrium Gallery in the Backstage Theatre during the festival. Children and their parents were also entertained on the night by Reuben from

'The Den'. We were honoured that local poet, Mary Melvin Geoghegan chose the Aisling Children's Festival week for the Longford Launch of Eurochild 2010 which featured poems from a number of local children. There was an enchanting theatre experience for our toddlers on Wednesday morning in the Canal Studio at Backstage Theatre with the tiny theatre and magical story of The Paper Princess.

The workshop programme started on the Family Fun Day and continued during the week in Kenagh, Ardagh, Moyne, Granard, Lanesboro, Newtownforbes, Drumlish and Clondra during the week and finished with a full day of workshops in the Temperance Hall on Saturday. As well as the old popular reliables, we had brand new workshops on offer this year including Football Stadiums, Throw a Pot, Slate Painting, Really Cool Rain Sticks, Flower Pot People, Kindermusik and the Aisling Gym. Almost 600 children participated in the workshop programme during the week.

We would like to congratulate all the winners in the Art Competition especially Cian Clancy, Stonepark National School who won the overall prize and who will have his picture featured in next year's brochure.

And so another festival comes to an end, but planning has already started for

next year's festival and we are looking forward to the premier of the film project that the students from Ballymahon Vocational School have been working on.

This annual children's festival would not be possible if it were not for the very generous sponsorship that is received from all our sponsors especially our local business sponsors. We would like to record our sincere gratitude to them. Thanks to all our supporters who ensure that Aisling continues from year to year, to the teachers in our local schools, and to the families, both parents and children who support

Aisling in their attendance and appreciation of the festival. The festival committee is always looking for new members. The terms of employment are long hours, no pay, but lots of fun! If interested please email us on aislingfestival@hotmail.com or contact any member of the committee. The festival is organised by a local voluntary committee including Maria Gray, Patricia McKiernan, Colette Meally, Nora Horan, Angela Crossan, Moe Reynolds, Fiona Jackson, Teresa McGuinness, Sive McGuinness, Brid Nevin, Rosie O'Hara, and Aine O'Sullivan.

## National Parents Council Primary

National Parents Council Primary (NPC-P) is a nationwide organisation representing parents of children attending early and primary education. NPC is recognised by the Government and the Education Act of 1998 as a body representing parents. Our aim is to enrich the education of all children and support parents to get involved in their children's learning at home, at school and in the community.

It is essentially an umbrella body for all Parent Association s of all National Schools in the country.

NPC have a permanent staff located at 12 Marlborough Court, Dublin and an excellent website, [www.npc.ie](http://www.npc.ie)

Every National school's Parent Association is entitled to join and send a representative to meetings and discussions held from time to time around the country. Every National School who have affiliated is entitled to send a nominated representative to vote on education issues as they arise.

NPC is organised on a county and regional basis. Longford County have had a committee since 1985 when NPC commenced. The organisation is totally voluntary at county level with a Chairperson, Secretary Treasurer and committee members who attend meetings at National level.

The county committee disseminate information on education issues, e.g. class size, curriculum issues, special needs, safety, as well as holding seminars on education issues, e.g. bullying, dyslexia, healthy eating etc.

Longford branch hold an annual County Quiz inviting all National Schools in the County to send one or two teams of four pupils to compete for a trophy and prizes.

Last year the County branch held a number of road shows around the county with two aims to promote the work of the NPC and to inform parents and teachers on the topic of special needs education. Monthly meetings are held in the Family Centre, St. Mel's Road, and Longford.

Any parent interested in getting involved or looking for information can contact the current committee: Chairperson, James Connors; Secretary, Mary Lillis; Treasurer, Joanne Pearman; National Representatives, James Connors and Mary Lillis. Phone: 087 962 5890 or Email: [npcplongfordbranch@gmail.com](mailto:npcplongfordbranch@gmail.com)



**St Martha's Hostel**  
Knockahaw,  
Dublin Road,  
Longford.

**Society of St Vincent De Paul**  
Telephone: 043 33 48062

St Martha's Hostel provides temporary accommodation for homeless men. We provide accommodation and food in a warm, safe environment.

We offer support and links to other service providers and to follow on accommodation.

The hostel operates on a 24-hour day, 7 days a week basis and all staff are welcoming and friendly and confidentiality is assured.

Staff are fully trained in areas of homelessness.

**If you find yourself in need of our support please contact the above number.**

*"Hostels are no longer just about providing shelter, they are a stable force for the person at a time of crisis in their lives"*

**BETHANY HOUSE, Women's Hostel/Refuge, Longford.**




**Society of St Vincent De Paul. Telephone: 087 7497043**

Bethany house offers accommodation to women and their children who find themselves homeless because of domestic abuse or other crisis related issues.

It operates on a 24 hour day, 7 days a week basis and all staff are welcoming and friendly, confidentiality is assured.

We provide safe accommodation that meets the needs of women who are homeless and we provide support and links to other service providers and to follow on accommodation.

**STAFF ARE TRAINED IN AREAS OF:**

- HOMELESSNESS
- DOMESTIC ABUSE & ADVOCACY

**IF YOU FIND YOURSELF IN NEED OF OUR SUPPORT PLEASE CONTACT THE ABOVE NUMBER**

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